

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND the claims as indicated below:

1. (ORIGINAL) An electronic mail (e-mail) system that has: a first information terminal (70) for transmitting and receiving sound information and text information; a second information terminal (40) for transmitting and receiving sound information and text information in different ways; and a managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10i, 10j, 10k, 10l, 10m, 10n), communicably interconnected between said first information terminal (70) and said second information terminal (40), for managing an e-mail message that includes at least text information to be transmitted and received between said first information terminal (70) and said second information terminal (40),

said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10i, 10j, 10k, 10l, 10m, 10n) comprising:

a text information notifying unit (21) for notifying said second information terminal (40) of the text information included in the e-mail message;

a sound information storing unit (23) adapted to store sound information related to the e-mail message; and

a managing unit (19) for managing association between the e-mail message and the sound information related to the e-mail message.

2. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10i, 10j, 10k, 10l, 10m, 10n) further comprising:

a telephone number selecting unit (18) for selecting a telephone number for use in handling the sound information related to the e-mail message transmitted from said first information terminal (70) to said second information terminal (40);

a telephone number notifying unit (21) for notifying said second information terminal (40) of the telephone number selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18); and

a managing unit (19) for managing association among the e-mail message, the telephone number, and the sound information related to the e-mail message.

3. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 2, further comprising:

a caller number obtaining unit (25) for obtaining a telephone number of said second information terminal (40) from which a telephone call is made to the telephone number selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18);

a telephone number detecting unit (26) for detecting whether or not a combination of the telephone number that is selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18) and the telephone number that is obtained by said caller number obtaining unit (25) matches a pre-determined combination; and

a selecting unit (27) for selecting, if the detection result by said telephone number detecting unit (26) is positive, the e-mail message as the one to which a reply message is to be made.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 through 3~~ claim 1,

wherein said second information terminal (40) includes a reply sound input unit (41) for inputting sound information, as a reply to the e-mail message, through an audio communication line specified by the telephone number,

wherein, of said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10i, 10k, 10l), said sound information storing unit (23) stores such sound information input from said reply sound input unit (41) as sound information related to the e-mail message, and

wherein said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10i, 10k, 10l) further comprises a reply information notifying unit (21) for notifying said first information terminal (70) of reply information that a reply in sound information form has been obtained from said second information terminal (40), based on the association managed by said managing unit (19).

5. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 4, wherein said reply information is a reply e-mail message.

6. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 5, wherein said reply e-mail message has the sound information attached thereto, which has been received from said second information terminal (40) and then stored in said sound information storing unit (23).

7. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 5, wherein said reply e-mail message has a pointer for use in accessing a section of said sound information storing unit (23) in which section said sound information is stored.

8. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 4, wherein said reply information is web data placed on the Internet.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 4 through 8~~ claim 4, wherein, of said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10i, 10k, 10l),

said text information notifying unit (21) prepares a notification e-mail message that contains the text information to be notified to said second information terminal (40);

said telephone number selecting unit (18) selects a sound input phone number for use in inputting sound from said second information terminal (40); and

said telephone number notifying unit (21) adds information about the sound input phone number, which is selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18), to the notification e-mail message, which is prepared by said text information notifying unit (21).

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 4 through 8~~ claim 4, wherein, of said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10i, 10k, 10l),

said text information notifying unit (21) prepares notification web data to which said second information terminal (40) is accessible, said notification web data including at least the text information received from said first information terminal (70);

said telephone number selecting unit (18) selects a sound input phone number for use in inputting sound from said second information terminal (40); and

said telephone number notifying unit (21) adds information about the sound input phone number, which is selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18), to the notification web data, which is prepared by said text information notifying unit (21).

11. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 10, further comprising an access detecting unit (28) for detecting whether or not access has been made by said second information terminal (40) to the notification web data,

if the detection result by said access detecting unit (28) is positive, said telephone number selecting unit (18) selecting said sound input phone number.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 9 through 11~~ claim 9, wherein said information about the sound input phone number is said sound input phone number itself.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 9 through 11~~ claim 9, wherein said information about the sound input phone number is an address of a web page indicating the sound input phone number thereon or a pointer for use in accessing the web page.

14. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 1, wherein, of said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10i, 10k, 10l), said text information notifying unit (21) prepares notification web data to which said second information terminal (40) is accessible, said notification web data including at least the text information received from said first information terminal (70), and

wherein said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10i, 10k, 10l) includes:

an access detecting unit (28) for detecting whether or not access has been made by said second information terminal (40) to the notification web data; and

a calling unit (29) for calling said second information terminal (40), if the detection result by said access detecting unit (28) is positive.

15. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 14, wherein said second information terminal (40) includes a reply sound input unit (41) for inputting sound information, as a reply to the e-mail message, through an audio communication line specified by the telephone number,

wherein, of said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10i, 10k, 10l), said sound information storing unit (23) stores such sound information input from said reply sound input unit (41) as sound information related to the e-mail message, and

wherein said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10i, 10k, 10l) further comprises a reply information notifying unit (21) for notifying said first information terminal (70) of reply information that a reply in sound information form has been obtained from said second information terminal (40), based on the association managed by said managing unit (19).

16. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 15, wherein said reply information is a reply e-mail message.

17. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 16, wherein said reply e-mail message has the sound information attached thereto, which has been received from said second information terminal (40) and then stored in said sound information storing unit (23).

18. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 16, wherein said reply e-mail message has a pointer for use in accessing a section of said sound information storing unit (23) in which section said sound information is stored.

19. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 15, wherein said reply information is web data placed on the Internet.

20. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 2, wherein, if the e-mail message, transmitted from said first information terminal (70) to said second information terminal (40), has information added thereto about the sound information, said managing apparatus (10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10i, 10k, 10l) further comprises:

a sound information obtaining unit (30) for obtaining the sound information based on the information, added to the e-mail message, about the sound information, said sound information obtaining unit (30) then storing the thus obtained sound information, as the sound information related to the e-mail message, to said sound information storing unit (23);

a sound information reproducing unit (31) for reproducing the sound information stored in said sound information storing unit (23); and

a sound replay unit (42) for replaying the sound information, reproduced by said sound information reproducing unit (31), through said telephone number.

21. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 20, further comprising:

a caller number obtaining unit (25) for obtaining a telephone number of said second information terminal (40) from which a telephone call is made to the telephone number selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18);

a telephone number detecting unit (26) for detecting whether or not a combination of the telephone number that is selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18) and the telephone number that is obtained by said caller number obtaining unit (25) matches a pre-determined combination; and

a selecting unit (27) for selecting, if the detection result by said telephone number detecting unit (26) is positive, the sound information as that which is to be reproduced by said sound information reproducing unit (31).

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 20 ~~or claim 24~~, wherein said managing apparatus (10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10j, 10m, 10n) prepares, based on the association managed by said managing unit (19), reproduction information, as a reproduction information notification e-mail message, that an e-mail message which is addressed to said second information terminal (40), and to which information about sound information is added, has been received from said first information terminal (70).

23. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 22, wherein said reproduction information notification e-mail message includes said telephone number selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18).

24. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 22, wherein said reproduction information notification e-mail message has a pointer for use in accessing information indicating said telephone number selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18).

25. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 21, wherein said managing apparatus (10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10j, 10m, 10n) prepares, based on the association managed by said managing unit (19), reproduction information, in the form of web data placed on the Internet, that an e-mail message which is addressed to said second information terminal (40), and to which information about sound information is added, has been received from said first information terminal (70).

26. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 21 through 25~~ claim 21, wherein, of said managing apparatus (10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10j, 10m, 10n), said text information notifying unit (21) prepares a notification e-mail message that contains the text information to be notified to said second information terminal (40);
said telephone number selecting unit (18) selects a sound reproduction phone number for use in reproducing sound on said second information terminal (40); and

said telephone number notifying unit (21) adds information about the sound reproduction phone number, which is selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18), to the notification e-mail message, which is prepared by said text information notifying unit (21).

27. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 24 through 25~~ claim 21, wherein, of said managing apparatus (10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10j, 10m, 10n),

said text information notifying unit (21) prepares notification web data to which said second information terminal (40) is accessible, said notification web data including at least the text information received from said first information terminal (70);

said telephone number selecting unit (18) selects a sound reproduction phone number for use in reproducing sound on said second information terminal (40); and

said telephone number notifying unit (21) adds information about the sound reproduction phone number, which is selected by said telephone number selecting unit (18), to the notification web data, which is prepared by said text information notifying unit (21).

28. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 27, further comprising an access detecting unit (28) for detecting whether or not access has been made by said second information terminal (40) to the notification web data,

if the detection result by said access detecting unit (28) is positive, said telephone number selecting unit (18) selecting said sound reproduction phone number, and

said sound information reproducing unit (31) reproducing the sound information to said second information terminal (40) which is connected to said sound reproduction phone number through sound communication.

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 26 through 28~~ claim 26, wherein said information about the sound reproduction phone number is the sound reproduction phone number itself.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 26 through 28~~ claim 26, wherein said information about the sound reproduction phone number is an address of a web page indicating the sound reproduction phone number thereon or a pointer for use in accessing the web page.

31. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 14 ~~or claim 15~~, wherein, if the e-mail message, transmitted from said first information terminal (70) to said second information terminal (40), has information added thereto about the sound information, said managing apparatus (10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10j, 10m, 10n) further comprises:

a sound information obtaining unit (30) for obtaining the sound information based on the information, added to the e-mail message, about the sound information, said sound information obtaining unit (30) then storing the thus obtained sound information, as the sound information related to the e-mail message, to said sound information storing unit (23);

a sound information reproducing unit (31) for reproducing the sound information stored in said sound information storing unit (23); and

a sound replay unit (42) for replaying the sound information, reproduced by said sound information reproducing unit (31), through an audio communication channel established by a telephone call made by said calling unit (29).

32. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 31, wherein said managing apparatus (10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10j, 10m, 10n) prepares, based on the association managed by said managing unit (19), reproduction information, as a reproduction information notification e-mail message, that an e-mail message which is addressed to said second information terminal (40), and to which information about sound information is added, has been received from said first information terminal (70).

33. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 32, wherein said reproduction information notification e-mail message has a pointer for use in accessing said notification web data.

34. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 31, wherein said managing apparatus (10e, 10f, 10g, 10h, 10j, 10m, 10n) prepares, based on the association managed by said managing unit (19), reproduction information, in the form of reproduction information notification web data placed on the Internet, that an e-mail message which is addressed to said second information terminal (40), and to which information about sound information is added, has been received from said first information terminal (70).

35. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 through 34~~ claim 1, further comprising an identification information setting unit (32) for providing, if there are a plurality of such e-mail messages or if there are a plurality of such sound information items related to the individual e-mail messages, the individual e-mail messages or the individual sound information items with identification information for identifying the e-mail messages or the sound information items,

said managing unit (19) managing association among the e-mail messages and the sound information items related to the e-mail messages and the identification information provided by said identification information setting unit (32).

36. (ORIGINAL) An e-mail system as set forth in claim 35, further comprising an identification information inputting unit (43) for inputting such identification information so as to specify the e-mail message or the e-mail-related sound information corresponding to the input identification information.

37. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 through 36~~ claim 1, further comprising a sound guidance unit (24) for providing a user of said second information terminal (40) with guidance by voice.

38. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An e-mail system as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 through 37~~ claim 1, further comprising a web guidance unit (13) for providing a user of said first information terminal (70) or a user of said second information terminal (40) with a web page that shows guidance thereon.

39. (ORIGINAL) A method for transmitting electronic mail (e-mail) message that includes at least text information to be transmitted and received between a first information terminal (70) and a second information terminal (40), which first information terminal transmits and receives sound information and text information, and which second information terminal (40) transmits and receives sound information and text information in different ways,

said method comprising the steps of:

notifying said second information terminal (40) of the text information included in the e-mail message;

storing sound information related to the e-mail message; and

managing association between the e-mail message and the sound information related to the e-mail message.

40. (ORIGINAL) An information processing apparatus, communicably interconnected between a first information terminal (70) for transmitting and receiving sound information and text information and a second information terminal (40) for transmitting and receiving sound information and text information in different ways, for managing an electronic mail (e-mail) message, including at least text information, transmitted and received between said first information terminal (70) and said second information terminal (40), said information processing apparatus comprising:

- a text information notifying unit (21) for notifying said second information terminal (40) of the text information included in the e-mail message;

- a sound information storing unit (23) adapted to store sound information related to the e-mail message; and

- a managing unit (19) for managing association between the e-mail message and the sound information related to the e-mail message.

41. (ORIGINAL) An electronic mail (e-mail) managing program which instructs a computer to function as an information processing apparatus, communicably interconnected between a first information terminal (70) for transmitting and receiving sound information and text information and a second information terminal (40) for transmitting and receiving sound information and text information in different ways, for managing an e-mail message, including at least text information, transmitted and received between said first information terminal (70) and said second information terminal (40), said information processing apparatus comprising:

- a text information notifying unit (21) for notifying said second information terminal (40) of the text information included in the e-mail message;

- a sound information storing unit (23) adapted to store sound information related to the e-mail message; and

- a managing unit (19) for managing association between the e-mail message and the sound information related to the e-mail message.

42. (ORIGINAL) A computer-readable recording medium storing an electronic mail (e-mail) managing program thereon, which program instructs a computer to function as an information processing apparatus, communicably interconnected between a first information terminal (70) for transmitting and receiving sound information and text information and a second information terminal (40) for transmitting and receiving sound information and text information in different ways, for managing an e-mail message, including at least text information, transmitted and received between said first information terminal (70) and said second information terminal (40), said information processing apparatus comprising:

- a text information notifying unit (21) for notifying said second information terminal (40) of the text information included in the e-mail message;

- a sound information storing unit (23) adapted to store sound information related to the e-mail message; and

- a managing unit (19) for managing association between the e-mail message and the sound information related to the e-mail message.